

Ekphrasis Inside: Poems on Syria's Textiles and Beyond



Poets of Bedford Hills Correctional Facility

Krystal
Cindy
Candace
Zarah
Geri
Yarenis
Jackie
Brenda
Undine

Looking to Write: Katonah Museum of Art
with Pamela Hart, Teaching Artist
Rehabilitation Through the Arts
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Regal: A Ghazal

By Krystal

Historical oppression manifests a Syrian woman's festive dress.

Cotton descends from cotton picking ancestors.
Brutal suffering to desired Regal.

The Silk Road to the Capital of the first Islamic Caliphate
Intwine the bloodstained cotton, bullet riddled silk prospers Regal

Syria's natural resources tainted from British and French soldiers
Intruding and extrapolating terrain Regal

Cash crop embellish embroider elaborate cotton
Silk woman festive dress Regal

Derived from Qalamoun region
Transport to my silky brown oppressed flesh fit Regal

Intricate flare frames my modest gait
Woven eccentric threshold for Regal

Shed this money green tattered recycled perish and uninhabitable
Elements that tarnish Regal

Erectness asserts pattern
Architecturally parallel to Regal

Syrian warriors drape the cutting edge sword sleeve
Protecting with eloquent grace material Regal

Explosive pastel compliments its opal foundation
Splattered tassel missiles aim Regal

Flourish the oppressed fiery flame
Attach the blooming awaken light shine Regal

Vacant for shallow souls
A reminder of its birth right Regal

Ode to My Hijab

By Krystal

The hijab covers my perfect flaws
Misunderstood the hijab is called many names
Scarf, silk wrap or
The perception can add or devalue the purpose
The hijab is not masculine or feminine
It honors the self worth
The shape cascades the sister locks
Hidden jewels and strength
The hijab
Holds power to transform life

It creates invisibility during tranquility
Transparency in chaos
Hijab stands out in the normalized
Stillness of society
The hijab favors and conforms to its owner
While mastering its own autonomy
Hijab be the protector
From the destructive vices
Hijab awakens the spiritual realm
To smother the voices of nothingness



A Kin, Engraved

By Cindy

The echo in the limestone
Unrealistically lifelike
A divine kin

How ravishing they are
Muffled voices
Obnoxiously pleasant

Lacking raw emotion
Similar sensational sneers
Seeking sensuous surroundings

Harmoniously rehearsed
A state of authority
Such a balanced hostility

Entwined equanimity
The eternal enclosure
Elegant expressions

Comfortably saturated
Fundamental strength
Textiles vibrantly connected

A picture engraved
Righteously radiant
Against time's history

Souls enduring
An irrevocable commitment
Chaotically composed



Clouded Faces

Inspired by archival photographs

By Cindy

Fending off the agony
Such a business to endure
Hopelessly haunting
Negligently attentive
Seemingly chastised
An unresolved dilemma
Inflated expectations
Jinx of their souls
Hearts disintegrating
An imbalance within
The Clouded Faces
Elaborate expressions
Questionable, yet relevant

Punished for their
Immortality
But isn't punishment
Immoral?
An ethical predicament
The bright light is
Dimming
Such sacred sanity
Deeply superficial
One's dream to hope
For a seemingly similar
Yet different world.

Joseph's Faithfulness*

By Candace

Cherished son, technicolor coat, so vibrant
Appears his father's favorite, deeply, faithfully

Envious brothers, brewing hatred
A plan to kill, lacking faithfulness

Sold into slavery, never losing hope
Proves trustworthy, dedicated, faithful

Resists temptation, yet wrongfully accused
Perseveres through consequences, faithfully

Trust in the Lord, abundantly blessed
In charge of many, continuously faithful

Famine strikes, great preparations he had made
Here come his brothers, testing his faith

No resentment held onto, revealing himself
Only love and compassion extended, forever faithful



**The entari robe reminded me of Joseph's story in the Bible, which is one of my favorites.*

Threads of Pride

By Zarah

Percolated piercing purple
labeled hot springs

Hand crafted
crocheted by me
for me

Soft on the skin
tight knitted
blocking the cold air.

Cape-like hood
bellows as I walk
contours to my face

Drapes over my shoulders
Infinity wraps
around my neck

Trapping body heat
Weathering the storm

Could be worn
as a shawl
Designed from the heart
a pattern unwritten.

A test of my
new skill
a hobby discovered

A piece of pride
donned.
Whenever can

A piece that took months
to create
and unique

Drowned out
from this cell
soaked in a rhythm

Headphones blasting
but unheard
transferring beats
and speed
into my hands

The intensity to
represent me

The intricate
fascination in hearts
using my beloved color.

Measuring to cover
my crown
and hug me just right,
not strangling
nor too loose.

A mirage of a deep
plum purple
but really
threads of black
providing depth.

Plangi

By Zarah

Fancy festive dress
at the hands
of skillful
women.

Dyed once
Twice
Three times
Finding yellow

Working fast
Working efficient
Cotton ties
Into patterns

Dyed again
Raging reds
Then again
Bleaching black

Lozenges
Of
High quality
raw silk

Waste made valuable.



Woman's Coat

By Zarah

Colors of depth
combinations and culture
Woven and stitched
with a purpose

For women
comfort, warmth
against
the coolness of
Northern Syria

Pockets
for safe keeping
Splits to accommodate strides
designs and blues made to protect.

A weight to carry
but lighter
than
the world

Woman
has the tendency
of carrying

In this coat
full of identity
worn with pride
all worries aside

Snuggled
under
colors of depth
combinations and culture.

Textile
woven and stitched
with care
and time.



A Social Scarf

By Geri

My hues are subtle
and seductive
my bold stripes
strike order.

My interior intricate designs
signify complexity
of our culture.

Strung out on my perimeter
an evenly spaced array of tassels
draws your eyes from my center
prompts you to wonder why...

these are not outcasts
these have earned their space
their peace – apart
from the lesser masses.

I was woven long, painstakingly
by artisans who loved the People
those who wore and enjoyed us
We were sold, given, and passed on.

This part of the world is scorchingly hot
by day – yet cool nights tingle
I encircle one's shoulders
like a friend's embrace.

I serve as a perimeter
a beautiful boundary
blocking the sunshine and
conserving your personal warmth.

I am a quality and costly piece
only the wealthy could afford me
Most of my time, saw me gracing
the body of a princess – a fashion
accessory for royalty.



Alas, the winds of change blow hard
today's dynasty turns to tomorrow's
martyrs – palaces pillaged
their ruins left as burned testaments.

A fine scarf escaped such
a grim fate, by careless mistake
left behind on the outer perimeter
later the bounty of a lucky scavenger

A beggar plucking a lifetime's
worth of his earnings from
off the desert sand – a fortune
a newly funded future in his hands.

He prepares to make prayer:
Allah Akbar! (God is great!)
Allah Akbar!
Allah Akbar!

Blossom

Inspired by archival photographs

By Geri

Tiny, tender and strange seedlings
Pollinated in a place so starkly ill-fated.

Their place of origin
was strewn with refuse
infected with bacteria and viral stew.
while rodents and roaches ran about.

Here lies a quagmire
where life stories end
where the State keeps its
contemporary dungeon.

Here – nobody expects more to bloom
from windblown seeds
than toxic toadstools
and raggedy weeds.

A sturdy stalk – strong
against the winds and
the weave of variegated leaves
displays its exotic lineage

Still more, its flowers
capture our focus

Hues of pinks and blues aswirl
in a mosaic so intricate

You cannot discern where
one ends, and the other begins.

A fantastic fusion of two disparate genius
spontaneously coalescing into a single
new and unique species – bounded both
physiologically, and by love.

This bloom rising above a ruined prison
flaring brightly, signaling a mission
a future untold, a rainbow unfolding
– arcing into tomorrow.

Perhaps we will name
our child: “BLOSSOM.”

A Sapient Slum Story

Inspired by archival photographs

By Yarenis

Bedford Reformatory photos.
A glimpse and feel for the past.
Females just like me, feeling solo.
Were they too threatened the max?
Black and white photos, females diverse.
Each a different background.
Some here a short while, some lifers.
Find out, but don't ask around.
The same familiar frowning faces,
In the year nineteen-o-one.
Some have a chance with open cases.
It's definitely no fun.
Exercise, mess-hall, or in a cell.
Until you're put to work.
At all times regarded as hostile.
Cold, knowing you're up North.
Subjected to the simple minded.
Berated just for breathing.
A tear for the simplest kindness.
The atmosphere's defeating
If back then is anything like now,
A pre-death undertaking.
Sadistic spirits tearing you down.
Hatred is suffocating.
The meanest inmates crush your spirits,
Rule the unit and dorm.
A gentle soul, don't want to hear it.
Wickedness, a sandstorm.
Abandoned hearts here, erratic cops.
Heathenism, beset.
Me, touching down with traumatic shock,
Found this place desolate.
My mind, my soul, my spirit emptied.
Just to pour it inside,
I looked for goodness, something tempting.
Found a people who died.
Angry and easily agitated.
Haphazard whims and ways.
My own thoughts gone, devastated.
Open-minded in those days.
The simple fact that I am here too,
Thought I was just like them.
Although it took years, got a clear view.
Never entertained fightin.'

De-escalated, ego appeased.
Always gentle and humble.
Not like them, never completely pleased.
Inside, they are all troubled.
Treated me like an awful person.
Steadfast to show I was good.
My affliction's all they were searchin'
Back then, wish I understood.
Played into my insecurities.
I gave them upliftment.
Perfect, punctuated purity.
From the world, I'm different.
This enraged them and radicalized
All the inmates against me.
Ambushed by lies and critical eyes.
Murdered my spirit, envy.
Tried to sabotage my mental health.
Still I spoke to them sweetly.
Filthy, fiery, fiendish they felt.
Tucked my pain away neatly.
My timid humility patient.
No one acknowledged it.
Spanish, Jewish, Black and Caucasian,
Played prison politics.
Selfish, self-serving, slithering snakes.
Tried to rob my goodness.
The purest nature, they don't relate .
Love me back? They couldn't.
Inconsiderate, my tolerance.
Maxed out and overlooked.
Evil encountered my endurance.
My innocence they took.
People gather broom twigs only to
Be swept with the same broom.
Sympathy for inmates, I refuse.
Doomed themselves, I assume.
I did every single thing I should
To show a love that's pure.
Not in vain, from prison like the hood,
This poet rose in stature.
Some may have shared my experience
In the reformatory.
Prison penalties are salient.
A sapient slum story.

A Nod to Men

By Yarenis

I was asked to highlight an item,
Something I might wear.
I chose a scarf like a tie tightened
‘Round my neck not my hair.
No Tsalot Shasha, sari, sarong.
Certainly no Khimar.
Signifies men and I get along,
The wisdom it imparts.
A savvy, savory electric.
Sympathize with the guys.
Know I’m delectably male centric.
Females can criticize.
The tie’s striking, bold and suitable.
I’m hip-hop casual.
Finding feminists refutable.
And quite irrational.
It’s a subconscious supremacy.
When I wear it, regal.
It’s a sleek, silky, satin cloth-piece.
A deep shade like Senegal.
Getting lost, light-years into deep space.
It is dark like midnight.
Also, succulent, dense, rich in taste.
A stolen eye’s delight.
Around sunrise, when I pick one out
To match with my outfit.
A color chosen, a day announced,
I’m feeling the proudest.
Soundly, spirited I twist the scarf,
Fashioning a tie.
In both look and mind, sharp like a dart,
Becoming aligned.
Sensible, self-confident, snappy,
A brotherhood symbol.

If separate from females, I’m happy.
Don’t confuse with bimbos.
The tie exudes sophistication.
A smart style, sexy.
From these female kings, a vacation.
Submission is the best thing.
‘Cause a ranking system is natural.
Realize this and you’d rise.
My tie is sensual, practical,
Everyone scrutinized.
Prideful adult-girls with no patience,
I find them self-serving.
They do not like subordination,
No teaching or learning.
They want their rights to be just like men.
Shirk being a woman.
All that’s interconnected, fightin’
They’re never going to win.
Operation: “Let them hang themselves”
Mindless females in a maze.
For “Corruption Domination” fell,
Yes, me, I coined the phrase.
The tie means I’m not disgruntled.
I agree with nature.
It’s simply business, not personal,
In men, I find favor.
Something never received from females,
Approval or freedom.
Teaching the ropes, men gave me details.
The tie showing reason.
A style that men fully endow.
My tie, serenity.
Finding I’m distinguished and stand-out,
The truth, evidently.

Nas
By Yarenis

Psst! Hey you,
come here.
You know you should.
I got you, don't worry.
An upstate girl who moved to the hood.
I have a good story.
I was lost and confused in this world
Without much self-esteem.
I had nothing over other girls,
But I still had my dreams.
Meeting 5%ers in Harlem,
I got knowledge of self.
Education, hip-hop, hard gems,
Recreated I felt.
Like all my dreams were now possible.
Started writing lyrics.
I overcame any obstacle.
Fire in my spirit.
One day, walking past a movie set,
"American Gangster."
Asked out on a date, I don't regret
That "yes" was my answer.
Never cancelling on me, this dude,
An extra, had to work.
Brought me to Nas' video shoot.
Proved I was a new sort.
A female in a whole group of men.
Rappin', spit my own shit.
Who knew, Nas thought I was a hundred
Percent, got his focus.
Letting me take a photo with him,
Glasses on, his eyes smoulder.
Refracting light like a prism,
His hand on my shoulder.
My moment with greatness, I realize.
I have a big smile.
A hoody with his "N" design.
That whole day was wild.
Telling me nothing, he let me float.
A fluttering butterfly.
Amongst the hopeless and dead people,
Cultivated a lover's side.
Looked for a man at least similar
To Nas, maybe poetic.
Intelligent, soulful, familiar,
Authentic, with no edits.
Soul searching these guys, I stayed busy.



Most men squandered their shot.
They didn't know what to do with me.
My existence is a shock.
No run of the mill hood chick.
Don't confuse with low lives.
I treat guys the way they couldn't.
All my thoughts crystalize.
I remedy the men I foster.
Heal them if they let me.
I'm sexy, conscious, no imposter.
Guys felt they weren't ready.
They were certain I could do better
And tried to destroy me.
Not deterred from my goal, I weathered.
Met the next guy coyly.
Noteworthy, all these guys turned violent.
Didn't know it fazed me.
Didn't completely foil my plans,
But I did go crazy.
When I was good and mentally ill,
That's when Nas made contact.
For war, gave me a license to kill.
I went in like Iraq.
Did a whole bunch of time in prison.
And I'd do it again.
I'll never take back my decision.
Can I get an Amen?
Finding no other men quite like Nas,
I know he's the Holy Grail.
Who knew, hidden from every eye, Oz:
The next Nas is a female.

Beauty: A Self-Made Beauty

By Yarenis

Deny a diamond from the dirt, doubt
me unduly.
A wisdom body filled with beauty.
Submerged in my studies, scholarly,
you see.
Building up my brain with beauty.
Befitting benevolence, a battle
brewing
Between the ugly and beauty.
Samurai savvy, stated down,
schooling.
From adversity to beauty.
Determined to deliver doing my duty.
A job well done, the beauty.
Brainy bombs like ballistics, bad and
bougie.
Beat out the rest in beauty.
My peaceful, polite patience, purity
pooling.
To the last drop of beauty.
Drown debased dragons, damsel's
doing.
There is power in beauty.
Clued into corruption, my composed
and cooling,
Calm and collected beauty.
Gazing at the disgruntled engaged in
grueling
Hardness that takes their beauty.
Filthy, phony in fact, friendliness
don't mean fooling.
Steadfast kindness, a whetstone for
beauty.
Having heinous hindrances, hatred for
who sees
Their deformity next to beauty.

Witness the wicked, unworthy,
wooing.
Dejection to them is beauty.
Misfortunes manifested, mad and
moody.
Optimistic, a beauty.
Rampant ratchetology, my ratchet
ruling.
Purifying is my beauty.
Diabolical, deplorable and I'm
drooling.
Truly, I see the beauty
In childish, chump chicken-heads, I'm
not choosy.
The game itself is beauty.
Egregious egoism, death ensuing.
Universally, a beauty.
Tempted by entrails, tension tender,
toothy.
A bloody bath full of beauty.
Obliterate the obnoxious, ovaries
oozing.
My remaining righteous, the beauty.
Salvaged my soul, strangely soothing.
Good and a graceful beauty.
Sacred sacraments for so many to see.
Dancing around, a beauty.
Bloody ballad ballerina, a bride to be.
Exceptionally, his beauty.
Nationally a no brainer, nevertheless,
newly.
My entire life's work, a beauty.
But without a big booty or big
boobies
Ugliness won't see...My beauty.

Sandstorm, Rainstorm, Firestorm

By Yarenis

This relief sculpture is from Palmyra.
The archers depicted are protectors.
Poised to protect caravans.

Containing considerably costly cargo.
Stylish textiles and metals like gold.
A significance so solid.

Solid as limestone reflecting on
culture.
Any direction of light shining on this
sculpture
Will always determine the shade.

Relentless ridicule of Roman
conventions.
A seductively syrupy, sticky slander.
Short-sighted and self-serving.

Misguided and ungrateful guilt-trip
always given.
Largely incomplete and conveniently
clouded.
A variety of victimhood.

I virtuously value truth and have a
clear vision.
My perfectly purity is patient, poised
and polite.
Relate to an unpopular past.

Men riding on camels and Arabian
horses.
Across the Syrian desert, along the
Euphrates River
With swords, bow cases, and quivers.

This sculpture, a hint of men storming
the desert.
Formidable adversaries to evil
encountered.
Wickedness, a sandstorm.

Hooves trampling and treading.
Belongings clinking and clanking.
Sand displaced in the air.

Displaced aboriginals when white
men took over.
Uprooted and weeded out, replacing
the wanton.



Tactically, each territory.

Surrounded by sadistic swamps,
saturated savagery.
Torture chamber terrorists, uncharted
and chilling.
Head and heart hacking hostility.

An inevitable end to the ghastly
egregious.
Take heed to a heinous, heart-
hardening history.
Like limestone, a breaking point.

Missing pieces in the sculpture, like
words left unsaid.
A juggernaut, a justifiable day of
judgement.
The white man, a deluge.

The brightest minds brought the earth
better bearings.
Bountiful like the bourgeoisie,
blessings like the Bible,
Refining the uncivilized.

Immoral ways could *never* inherit the
entire earth.
Legendary, universal laws would
never allow it.
Only the purest receive the planet.

Virtuousness is aligned with
intelligence.
A guiding glory generated with
ingenuity.
Taking the world, a rainstorm.

When you're pure, detecting impurity
is easy.
Even as all considerations for the
subject applied,
Your death, relentlessly sought.

My exact experience with aboriginal
descendants.
Impenetrably perverse, souls
putrefied, pompous.
Tried to kill my kindness completely.

A cautious Caucasian may be
clandestine.
Remarkably refreshing when they
realize I'm rational.
White people are reasonable.

The universe gives what is utterly
deserved.
We don't need to do anything except
work on ourselves.
Victimhood, virtually bullshit.

Those who claim injustice, "woe is
me," pointing fingers
Without a single worry about where

they went wrong,
Deserve their entire circumstance.

Complexion doesn't matter, degrees
of righteousness do.
Lauryn Hill said, "How you gonna
win when you aint right within?"
Valid and invariable,

This Palmyrene sculpture from the
second century,
Still relevant, radiant, and
representative.
Detected the distinction and merit.

Men with a penchant for purpose, a
plan.
After finding a flagrant, fiendish,
filthy earth...
Correction, a firestorm.

Timeless Woman's Cape

By Jacqueline

Given the opportunity to finger
through slides of Syrian textiles
and garment.

Wow, I'm drawn to a woman's cape.
Made in the late 19th, early 20th century:
Still fashionable today?
Yes.

As I studied its details, it took me
on a quest.
Made of silk, cotton, wool,
metal-wrapped thread, satin weave,
braided felt, and something else.

A calligraphy feature repeated
throughout. A phrase in Arabic
"there is no god but Allah."

This woman's cape – oh – imagine
it worn while hosting an evening date.

Smooth, royal and rather bright
Colors of rust, gold, black and white

Floating across the floor just right.

Aah, it's adorned with a hood
to add appeal to my innate royal feel.

Modern in fact, cause it enhances
the mood whenever its worn.

So as the evening comes to an end
it will help you feel covered, full and
ready to begin.



Ode to My Ski Suit

By Jacqueline

Aka Jackie Rose

You oh ski suit
You look like the future
action
I celebrate you
because you are fashion's
finest
Your color is like blue diamonds

I like the sound of you because
you are strength
Your shape is like a globe
You taste like
sparkling champagne

You oh ski suit move like a stallion

Oh ski suit
You are important
because you enhance me
and because you're cool

You remind me of strength
You are as thunder and as lightning

Matrix all blue

I feel like a superhero when
you are worn

I honor you ski suit because
by you I discovered the
making of fashion trend...

Oh ski suit
You are the power
needed
to
overcome
fears
of dressing differently.

Ambai

By Brenda

Oh Ambai
You look Goddess-like
I celebrate your beauty

Ambai of Palmyra
You princess
with smooth hands
beautiful skin

Lavish jewelry
symbols of wealth
Extraordinary status
High family lineage

Oh Ambai
holding spindle
making great thread
embroidered silk

Oh Ambai
clothing like silk
so comfortable

Oh Ambai
eyes of wonder
pale color
saddens me

Ambai
seeming far
even though
so close

Oh Ambai
I honor you
being free
like wind



Untitled

By Undine

I'm off to hammam to relax my body
and mind along the water's pure elegance
within a pool of blue I go

And with a silk robe of marigold
that brushes delicately along my skin
Into the soothing vapors I step

I carefully walk into the quietness
and embrace it
Splashing the warmth into my structure

I think of nothing at all
This is time to forget
and let meditation chase me

I unwrap the robe and submerge into the
lukewarm water misting smokey breezing blues

My silhouette and this enchanting warmth
of wetness that surrounds me
How I've waited so long to feel this

I have come from far to Syria
A visitor who comes to remember
sensations that amaze

I've purchased this robe at market
Where I've carefully selected its vibrant make
Never knowing how rich its fabric would seem

Beautiful crisp quilted cotton golden weave
I'm so enlightened to have you cater
to my accompaniment.



Image credits:

Textile with shaded bands, from Dura-Europos, ca. 200–256. Wool; weft-faced tapestry weave, 201/8 × 61/2 in. (51.3 × 16.7 cm); 97/8 × 4 in. (25 × 10 cm); 25/8 × 11/2 in. (6.8 × 4 cm). New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery, Yale-French Excavations at Dura-Europos, 1933.489a-c. Photo: Courtesy of Yale University Art Gallery

Woman's festive dress, from the Qalamoun region, Syria, early 20th century. Cotton; plain weave with silk embroidery in tent, cross, and openwork stitches; printed cotton plain weave appliqué and inserts; silk cord and tassels, 51 × 63 in. (129.5 × 160 cm). Philadelphia Museum of Art, Gift of Titi Halle, 2012, 2012-5-2. Photo: Courtesy of the Philadelphia Museum of Art

Banquet relief of Zabdibol and family, from Palmyra, second half of 2nd century (after 148). Limestone, 201/4 × 251/8 × 67/8 in. (51.4 × 64.6 × 17.5 cm). New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, 1902, 02.29.1. Photo: Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, N.Y. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Woman's *entari* (robe), probably from Aleppo, late 19th–early 20th century. Silk, cotton, and metal-wrapped thread; satin weave, ikat; plain weave, printed; braided. At waist: 541/4 × 141/2 in. (137.8 × 36.8 cm). New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of H. R. H. Prince Michael of Greece, 1977, 1977.291. Photo: Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, N.Y. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Woman's *plangi* dress, probably from Hama, Syria, first half of the 20th century. Silk and cotton; plain weave; resist-dyed. At waist: 51 × 231/2 in. (129.5 × 59.7 cm). New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Dr. Marilyn Jenkins-Madina, in memory of her mother, Margaret Pyle Jenkins, 2008, 2008.274.4. Photo: Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, N.Y. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Woman's coat, probably from northern Syria, late 19th–early 20th century. Cotton, silk, and glass buttons; balanced plain weave, 50 × 541/2 in. (127 × 138.4 cm). Santa Fe, Museum of International Folk Art, Gift of Florence Dibell Bartlett, A.1955.86.938. Photo: Courtesy of the Museum of International Folk Art

Scarf, from Aleppo or Damascus, ca. 1850–88. Silk plain weave with tapestry-woven weft patterning, silk knotted edging, and braided fringe ending in tassels, 62 1/2 × 40 3/4 in. (158.8 × 103.5 cm). Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Bloomfield Moore Collection, 1882, 1882-1479. Photo: Courtesy of the Philadelphia Museum of Art

Relief sculpture with men riding camels and horses, from Palmyra, 2nd century. Limestone, 22 3/4 × 47 1/2 × 13 1/2 in. (57.7 × 120.7 × 34.5 cm). Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund, 1970.15. Photo: Courtesy of the Cleveland Museum of Art

Woman's cape, from Aleppo or Damascus, late 19th–early 20th century. Silk, cotton, wool, metal-wrapped thread, metal, and paper; satin weave; plain weave; braided; felt, 56 × 106 in. (142.2 × 269.2 cm). New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Gifts in memory of Paul M. Ettesvold, and Judith and Gerson Leiber Fund, 1994, 1994.302.2. Photo: Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Portrait of Ambai, from Palmyra, mid-1st–mid-2nd century. Limestone, 19 5/8 × 15 3/4 × 9 7/8 in. (50 × 40 × 25 cm). Pittsfield, Berkshire Museum, 1903.7.4. Photo: Courtesy of the Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield, Massachusetts

Woman's bath coat, from Aleppo or Damascus, first half of the 20th century. Silk and cotton; satin weave; plain weave; quilted. At waist: 53 × 21 in. (134.6 × 53.3 cm). New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Sarah H. Doran, 1979, 1979.41.1a. Photo: Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, N.Y. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art